

Interview with Lela Kogbara by Christabel Gurney on 3 August 2005, reproduced on the Anti-Apartheid Movement Archives Committee Forward to Freedom project website <http://www.aamarchives.org/>

Christabel Gurney: How did you first become involved in Anti-Apartheid? How did you first become aware of it?

Lela Kogbara: I'm not sure that I remember. It would have been early '80s – no before then. When I became aware, I now realise, was when I was Nigeria. I went to university in Nigeria and they had a number of South African students that the Nigerian Government were supporting – and Zimbabweans. I was one of a group of people who were not quite Nigerian enough, because I had been here [UK] and not English either, so I inhabited this world of non-mainstream Nigerians – outsiders, people who didn't fit.

CG: Did you go to school in England?

LK: I went to school in England, then went back to Nigeria, did my A levels there and then went to university. So it was my first year in university and I ended up inhabiting this space of non-people who didn't belong. And in that space were Zimbabweans and South Africans. And that's how I became aware and there were people there in exile who would have been fighting apartheid.

CG: Would that have been after '76?

LK: Some of them were post-Soweto. It would have been 1979, about 1979–80. I became very friendly with them and hung out with them. So they became part of my group, along with my Sri Lankan room-mate and my Ghanaian boyfriend at the time. We just had a mish-mash of people.

CG: What university was it?

LK: The University of Ibadan – it still is one of the best Nigerian universities, in the West [of Nigeria]. So we hung out together. But actually I wasn't politicised. So the non-belongingness was what banded us together rather than politics in any hard sense. I was aware then that they were on the run, that they had struggled, that they had fought, that they had been shot at, that their lives had been in danger – all those things.

CG: Did they talk about apartheid?

LK: They did, but not really. With hindsight that seems weird. They were great drinkers – we were all a bit wild. So we had politics, we were quite left-wing compared with a lot of Nigerians at the time. We joined in demos and got shot up, attacked by the police – demos against the Government generally, for one thing or another, for killing innocent students. So that's how I became aware that there were issues in South Africa, which is quite odd, because I was never taught it. I remember it being mentioned in school was I was in England, when I was probably about 14 or 15. I remember one of the teachers

trying to raise it with a class. But now I look back and think – how embarrassing that I didn't have any idea. The teacher was saying 'What do you think about apartheid? When is it right to fight? And when is it right not to?' And I didn't have any idea.

So then I did my national service and came to England, and became aware somehow. I came back to England in about 1985 after that experience, after the whole saga of doing my National Service. I was about 23. I came back here and somehow – I don't know how it happened. I just became politicised in a different way, in a way that wasn't just about interesting debates. In Nigeria, although I went on demos, I was never one of the leaders, the student leaders. I went on demos for fun, partly – they were about local student politics, what the government was and wasn't doing and so on. Somewhere along the line I just thought 'Apartheid is an insult to every black person on earth'. And I was angry. That was when I got back to Britain. It's difficult to say, with hindsight, but I think it was partly going from here and not having any particular race awareness – I was the only black girl in my year when I was at school in England. My aim was to fit in ...

CG: Where did you go to school?

LK: Sacred Heart School in Hammersmith. So I had no real politics. So here I am back in the UK in 1985 or 1986, living in Cromwell Road in West London, getting by, found a job.

CG: What were you doing?

LK: I worked in the ILEA – or the GLC first, and then it was abolished. So I became more political through various processes.

CG: Because of Maggie Thatcher?

LK: Probably, and the abolition of the GLC – that had a very politicising effect. I remember working with people who had a very clear view about what was going on, the left and the right, social justice and so on. I became black conscious, in a sense, probably for the first time in my life. Because going from England to Nigeria was a revelation in terms of being in a black country and having a completely different sense of self.

CG: Can you say a bit more about that?

LK: At school I fitted in. I was very popular, I was good at sport, sports captain. But I knew that something wasn't quite right. And when I went to Nigeria at first I was horrified by the bitchiness of the girls, but I felt at home and I felt a completely different sense of self-esteem, completely different sense of my place in the world.

CG: So did you suddenly realise that there was something wrong before?

LK: I realised there was. I had been quite suicidal in my period at secondary school and there was no apparent reason.

CG: So when you got to Nigeria, you didn't feel out of place – because you might have ...

LK: I did, but in a different way. I felt out of place as having come from England, but as a black person I felt very different. I realised that I must have had extremely low self-esteem, which I didn't name. I was also angry that here I was back home and still out of place. But it was the first time that I became aware. And so the whole hanging round with South Africans was to do with not belonging, but nonetheless it was a fun not belonging. I look back on it – it was still the best time of my life, the most developing, thinking, growth period. I came back here and saw myself as a black person in a way that I hadn't done before.

CG: Did the GLC help you in that?

LK: Politically, at a high level, yes. But in terms of day-to-day contact it was poor, maybe because I worked with some quite right-wing people. I worked in finance, temping, admin stuff. So somewhere along the line I became angry. I was angry about injustice against black people and South African people became the symbol of that injustice. I can't track how I moved through to that position.

CG: Can you remember what happened organisationally?

LK: I decided things like doing the boycott.

CG: Was that before you were aware of the Anti-Apartheid Movement?

LK: I was aware of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in the background. But I then joined something called BALSAs, Black Action to Liberate South Africa, which fitted in with the anger thing and the 'black people must liberate ourselves' and all the rest of it. We used to meet in Linda Bellos's office in Lambeth Town Hall along with Kwabena Owusu who used to work in the GLC, who probably did have an influence, a Ghanaian lawyer plus a few other people from the Caribbean and a couple of Africans. It was an African-Caribbean thing rather than a British black thing, in many ways. But it was going nowhere.

CG: Did it have any connection with South Africans?

LK: Not that I remember. It was a relatively small group of people who used to chat and chat – and after a while ... But I became more aware of the Anti-Apartheid Movement through the group, who didn't like the Anti-Apartheid Movement at all, and felt that they were a racist organisation. But after a while I thought 'This isn't going anywhere. We are not going to liberate South Africa like this.' And somehow through all this period of growth, or whatever you want to call it, I had become – and this was part of the journey – someone who wanted to deliver results. I thought that if you wanted to liberate South Africa, you had better have a method for achieving that objective. And I felt it wasn't going to do that. So I left, actively, totally, and joined the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

CG: Which bit did you join?

LK: I joined the main Anti-Apartheid Movement as an individual. And then I was given the Southwark Anti-Apartheid contact number and details, and so on. I got in touch with them, went to a couple of meetings. We used to meet in Southwark Town Hall. Ben Anthony was chair and the people that were involved that immediately come to mind are Mary Stacey, Stuart Bell, Patrick, Gaby Grace, Gerry George, Liz Wallis, Nancy Coulson and Sorrell. It was quite a nice group of people. So staying involved was partly that I felt that I had something in common with these people. I felt it was for me, I didn't feel alienated.

CG: Were they all white?

LK: We had a few black people - Sanjay, Faisal and Patrick come to mind. So it was mainly white, but for some reason it wasn't an issue for me. That was going back to being the only black girl at school – I can actually fit in with being in an all-white situation, and sometimes I forget to observe myself as being black in it, and that's all a bit weird. So I felt more comfortable, but slightly guilty about feeling more comfortable, but I thought 'This is going somewhere. There's a strategy, there's a plan, things are being done.' I thought 'This is it. This is good.' And we were a very active group. We used to do something every week. We'd go outside Safeway on the Walworth Road. We had a beautiful banner that I've got a fantastic photograph of: 'Shell fuels apartheid.' And we used to stand outside Shell – it was fun as well. We ran a stall, which a woman called Lesley, was firmly in charge of.

CG: Was it important that it was fun, that you liked the people?

LK: That was a really important thing. It's all very well to wear sackcloth and ashes – but it was really good fun. We socialised and had a good laugh.

CG: Did you have contact with the central AA office?

LK: Oh yes, we were properly affiliated. Things came down from central office and we did our days of action – always! We knew where we fitted in. We knew what the plan was. We had proper meetings with Minutes and so on.

CG: So those days of action really worked?

LK: We had the days of action mapped out. And if it wasn't a day of action, we had our own local thing that we would do. We were very disciplined.

CG: You didn't resent all the demands coming?

LK: Not at all. We were very much part of it – this must have been '86 or '87. And because we were very good friends – I started going out with Ben Anthony then, who

was Secretary of Southwark AA. All those things, which are very dodgy in some ways, are part of what make you wake up on a Saturday after being at work all week, and do something. It became my social life. We collected money. We had our own local fundraising. We had Jo Brand, she did a gig for us. It was a really vibrant group. Harriet Harman was our MP, though she was less active on the ground than Simon Hughes (the other MP) who was very good. He did local things. There was [Peter] Tatchell – we had a bit of an internal spat about Tatchell. But we moved on. I'm trying to remember when I became involved in the central thing.

CG: There are two issues – you were on the [AAM] Executive, but presumably first you were on the Black and Ethnic Minorities Committee.

LK: That's right. We then started having arguments locally. Not in terms of a split in our friendship, but genuine debates, because then I had become blackist again, at some point, I can't remember how. And I started saying 'These PAC people have got a point, you know'. And Ben said 'No, no, no. This will not do.' And I said 'No, we should support the PAC as well.' And he said 'You've got no politics. You don't understand.' So I went on the demos and went on everything else. We went as delegates to the AGMs. We agreed who was going to go ...

CG: Did you go to Sheffield in 1988?

LK: No, not to Sheffield. But I remember thinking at the AGMs 'This is really weird. People fighting and bickering. What a terrible situation'. So I had no idea ...

CG: It was the City AA days, but you didn't know ...

LK: I didn't understand. As far as I was concerned people doing their thing outside South Africa House was all very good and jolly. We had one or two infiltrators – not an infiltrator, but one guy was from the SWP [Socialist Workers Party] or something, who had his own particular angle. I just thought he had his point to make – I didn't realise that democracy wasn't a part of the agenda of the AAM [laughs]. So I read a little bit, and thought 'These PAC people have a point'. I thought the black consciousness thing was a really important point. Then the 'one settler, one bullet' seemed like a rather good idea as well, and so somehow we as Southwark AA at one of our meetings had a debate and decided that we should send someone – I don't know if we had been written to – to what was then called the Black and Ethnic Minorities Committee of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. We thought 'This is a good thing. We should send delegates to be part of this.'

CG: Do you think they did write to you?

LK: They must have. So I said I'd go, and I think Patrick was the other person. And off we went to this meeting. And, much to our horror, there was Alan Brooks [convenor of the Committee]. I thought 'He looks white, to me. What's going on?' And everybody else pretended there wasn't an issue. It all seemed very strange, but I didn't say anything.

And then I remember that we had one meeting at the House of Commons and Bernie Grant walked into the room and saw Alan and said 'Why are we sitting here with this white man?' and left. So I thought, well there is a point. So I raised it with a couple of people. I think Chitra [Karve] was on there, Chinyelu Onwurah was on the Committee, Glenroy [Watson], Angela and a whole lot of people. So I think I mentioned it to Chitra or someone – and they said 'Don't worry, he sits on the Women's Committee as well'. So we went back to the Southwark Group and we wrote a letter from Southwark to Mike Terry saying 'This is not acceptable. It's a Black and Ethnic Minorities Committee. We expect to be able to meet and have discussions. We don't need a white minder.' Or words to that effect. And all hell broke loose. Partly because Stuart [Bell] at the time was working in the [AAM] office. So we were getting feedback about what was going on. The Executive were livid. They thought 'How dare they.' Apparently Mike Terry was very very angry. But we couldn't understand what we had done wrong.

CG: Did you write them a letter as Southwark AA?

LK: Yes, 'We in Southwark AA Group ...' So they thought we were a bunch of nutters, threatening, out of order, and there was a whole kerfuffle. But Mary and Stuart were on the inside. I was on the outside. The politics of South Africa I was beginning to grasp, but the politics of the Anti-Apartheid Movement I had no idea about at all. So I remember Mary saying 'This is causing a lot of problems'. So the rest of the committee went along with us, they became a little bit more militant. After all this we were invited in for talks [with the AAM Executive Committee] – the Southwark lot. And Bernie Grant said 'Fantastic', but I look back and wonder why he didn't say something before. If he found it [having a white member of the AAM office staff on the Committee] unacceptable, and he was in a senior position, why didn't he object. But now I look back and think that I didn't have any idea what was going on. But I couldn't believe they could be so insensitive, and we accused them of peddling racism and so on.

CG: But you stayed with it ...

LK: Staying with it was interesting in itself.

CG: Why did you stay with it?

LK: Somehow, I believed in the Anti-Apartheid Movement as a vehicle. For some reason I had the belief that that was the right thing to do. I didn't have a problem with walking away from things that I believed weren't going to work. But somehow, I thought this was a battle – you don't walk away from ...

CG: Were you by now aware of the role of the ANC? Did you relate to the ANC?

LK: I related to the ANC. I was still not totally clear about why the PAC weren't allowed to have a voice. Because I agreed and accepted that the ANC was the majority voice, had a clear strategy, was the party that was likely to be in a leadership position if apartheid ever ended... I had all of that.

CG: Did you see the AA as the ally of the ANC?

LK: Definitely. I agreed that you had to support the people on the ground, that you needed to have an understanding of the politics of South Africa. But I couldn't understand why you had to be so unilaterally pro-ANC, to the exclusion of all others, it seemed.

CG: So you didn't stay with Anti-Apartheid because you saw that they were allied with the ANC.

LK: I thought that if anyone was going to win, the Anti-Apartheid Movement was going to win.

CG: Not the ANC, the Anti-Apartheid Movement ...

LK: I thought the ANC was going to win, but for me it was that if anyone was going to have an international effect, Anti-Apartheid was organised. There was a clarity and there was something that made me want to be part of it, regardless of whether they were controlling. I still wanted to belong – which was weird, with hindsight, because by this time I had met people like Mark Wadsworth, Lee Jasper and so on who were saying 'Why are you in that bloody thing? Get the hell out of it. It's a racist organisation.' They believed it to be a racist organisation. But I thought 'No, I don't actually agree with you.' I agreed that things weren't quite right about some things that were going on, but I didn't feel that was right. And actually we then renamed ourselves the Black Solidarity Committee. We spent ages talking about black and what it meant. We made specific efforts to reach out to black organisations.

CG: Did it become an all-black committee?

LK: Oh yes. Alan came off, or stopped coming, and we then got, as we felt, motoring. One of our biggest achievements, I think, was getting Mandela to visit Stephen Lawrence's. It was a link with Lee Jasper and – what was his organisation called? We got a line ...

CG: Now we're in the 1990s ...

LK: We tried to develop links with other black groups. One of our key features was that we then tried to have our own strategy about getting black communities engaged in anti-apartheid, with the Anti-Apartheid Movement. We had a lot of debates about 'Is it anti-apartheid or is it the Anti-Apartheid Movement?' Because as we reached out to these groups people were saying 'Anti-Apartheid Movement? No thanks.' So we decided to abandon the Anti-Apartheid Movement as an objective, but to say 'We want black people in the UK to fight apartheid, and the Anti-Apartheid Movement is not the issue.' And once we got over that, we then got the likes of Lee and the others on board...

CG: Can you dwell on that a bit. What groups are you talking about?

LK: It must have been in the early 1990s. The ARA [Anti-Racist Alliance] was just getting going. So they were one of the groups – that was before the split, but there was a struggle for black control. That was when we were quite in with Mark Wadsworth. Then there were Black Sections of the Labour Party – I can't remember [name of another organisation], but we had to drop AAM in order to get the engagement with the black community.

CG: This is after Mandela had been released?

LK: Mandela had just been released ...

CG: So people wanted to relate to the ANC and Mandela ...

LK: But before then, we were really struggling, because they couldn't understand why we were part of the AAM. So we developed these relationships. And I remember that we then had as an objective that we would not ignore racism in the UK, and that was a key part of what we had to look at as part of our strategy. So trying to get Mandela to visit the Lawrence family was part of that battle. We felt it was a real victory. He managed to see them at 7 o'clock in the morning. Chitra [Karve] went – I couldn't go. It was by making the links ...

CG: So did you feel it was a handicap being involved in the Anti-Apartheid Movement?

LK: I did, it felt like it. I wasn't sufficiently at the time aware of the landscape, really, of either black politics or the Anti-Apartheid Movement's politics. So I was quite surprised, and I couldn't understand – the combination of not understanding why the AAM wouldn't say 'There's the ANC, but there's also the PAC and the black consciousness movement' or why there wasn't a large black presence of the black community in the UK in the AAM.

CG: So you were aware that there wasn't ...

LK: ... and that the AAM was a very white organisation. But it was only after having got onto the Black Solidarity Committee that I realised that there was active hostility from the black community to the AAM. Because before then I had just tried to piece the bits together.

CG: But what black community?

LK: There was an umbrella organisation. There were various black groups, a lot of them were quite small, and this thing that Lee Jasper chaired was the umbrella organisation – I can't remember its name. So beginning to piece the thing together and the dynamic of what was going on – the PAC I think was part of the problem.

CG: Did the PAC have someone here?

LK: Yes, and I remember thinking 'Well, why can't he be invited?' And it was like, in Southwark, it was 'No, No, it's not allowed. You cannot have the PAC and the ANC sharing a platform. You will blow the whole thing if you try and do this'. I didn't quite understand what the problem was. But I began to see that a lot of the black organisations that were political were anti-apartheid but were not AAM supporters, were firmly behind the PAC, preferred the PAC, and not liking the AA as well, thinking it was a white organisation and so on.

CG: Looking back, do you have the impression that that was because they had links to the PAC, or because they didn't like AA politics?

LK: No, I think they liked the PAC politics and the consequence of that was that the AAM, and its alignment with the ANC, was the problem. I think that was it.

CG: Who was on the Black Solidarity Committee?

LK: There was Glenroy Watson, Tim Oshodi, Chitra [Karve], Angela Linton, Chinyelu & Ngozi Onwurah, , who was a film-maker at the time, and other people who I can't recall right now.

CG: All the people you've mentioned weren't terribly representative of anything on the ground.

LK: No, they were AAM people who were black, rather than grassroots black representatives. And that was what became obvious as well after a while, that all of us had come into black consciousness – not black consciousness, but we hadn't been in black politics and I think that was a key factor. We joined the AAM and therefore began to make links with black politics, rather than black politics and then the AAM. The other people we were trying to make links with had been in black politics. So we were trying to get involved with the various organisations and trying to do joint things and recognise them and them us and so on, but we had not been part of them. So they were quite suspicious of us. They saw us as stoogy people, with a colonial mentality. So it was ...

CG: So did you make any headway?

LK: We developed what I would call a reasonable working relationship, through not insisting on AAM and all agreeing that anti-apartheid was the issue and the AAM bit was just one vehicle, and there were lots of other vehicles. And that was a compromise which you – that was the thing. We did debate this a lot at the committee.

CG: To make it clear – whether you should go round as AAM ...

LK: We had lots of debates about – we decided not to oppose the idea that the PAC should have a voice, for example, and so on. So those were some of the compromises

that enabled us to have a relationship with black organisations. I did a piece in the *Voice* about why black people should be involved in the anti-apartheid movement – or in the anti-apartheid struggle, as opposed to Movement, and that was all part of ...

CG: But did you try to put over the idea that the ANC were actually the people who were on the ground. Was that an issue – who was actually doing the business in South Africa?

LK: We had debates about it on the committee and were generally supportive of the ANC as the lead organisation. And so when I say it was a compromise, it was a compromise in the sense that I don't think as a group of people that we totally bought into what the black groups felt.

CG: You mean you had a genuine debate – and did the Mandela thing play in that – the campaign around Mandela as the big man, who was ANC ...

LK: It wasn't played in the black community. My recollection is that it wasn't an ANC issue. Mandela wasn't a symbol of the ANC to the black community. He was a symbol of South Africa, of liberation, of struggle, and so on, but not as the ANC.

CG: So the people who said the PAC had a point weren't being anti-Mandela.

LK: Not at all. Mandela was still a hero, an icon, but he wasn't – the fact that he was a leader of the ANC was not the big thing that Mandela had in terms of a draw. And there was a guy who worked ...

CG: Were they aware of Oliver Tambo?

LK: Yes, they were aware of Oliver Tambo. But it was Biko, Mandela, Oliver Tambo, etc. It wasn't – and it was like there are the black leadership, but it wasn't played as an ANC ...

CG: Oliver Tambo would have gone along with that, because he was actually very inclusive.

LK: And so there was no hostility at all to Mandela, or to Oliver Tambo, or Govan Mbeki or any of the ANC leadership... and so then we didn't do anything. We organised a few events to try and get joint support for black people's engagement with the anti-apartheid struggle. We wrote things. We went to some of the other back political things as Black Solidarity Committee. I believe that we did get some respect from these various groups as a result – my memory is appalling – somebody who has a memory might give a better picture – so we got much more involved with them. We developed a reasonable relationship and became quite friendly. All the while –

CG: Interesting that you weren't sectarian.

LK: Actually we debated it a lot – about what our politics should be, about what we should compromise on and what we should insist on, what the bottom line was. And I think the conclusion that it wasn't about the AAM as an organisation was an important point psychologically for many of us, but why are we here? We are here because we think apartheid should be defeated, and we need to struggle against apartheid, and the AAM is the biggest vehicle – the most likely to – the most successful galvanising point for the people.

CG: Because this was after the Mandela concert, so it was big ...

LK: My recollection – I remember the Mandela concert. I remember all of those things, and I don't recall anything other than a passion for apartheid needing to be defeated. And the whole experience with Alan Brooks and so on had made me feel that there was something awry with the Anti-Apartheid Movement and its attitude. I was also aware of the City [Anti-Apartheid Group] thing, and again I didn't particularly support the idea that the City Group should be ostracised. I had a view about that – I didn't particularly understand why there couldn't be some kind of accommodation of them and their peculiarities. I suppose in a sense I wasn't political enough in a way, personally. The fact of City AA being Trots ...

CG: They weren't Trots – they were Fight Racism Fight Imperialism ...

LK: And I didn't feel I had a view towards them, had a view which was that they had their point. I didn't agree with a lot, but I thought so what – their view that it's an imperialist struggle rather than a specifically racist one. And I don't agree necessarily with that, because it was very irritating to watch City people after a while ...

CG: At what point did you go on to the Executive? I can check this out in the minutes... When you did, how did you feel about being on the AA Executive?

LK: Very late, and I think it was a compromise – very late in the day. Mike's [Terry] perspective on this is completely different from mine. What I tried to remind him in more recent years, he seemed to have no memory of it, of the Black Solidarity Committee's struggle with the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and the Alan Brooks situation.¹ He seemed to have no memory of it at all.

CG: How did you happen to get on to the Executive Committee? You had been elected?

LK: Somebody said – I think I was co-opted. And with hindsight I realise it must have been – actually these people aren't trying to destabilise the Movement, but people who are broadly well-meaning. Because I thought to myself – it's a tactic to get somebody from the Black Solidarity Committee on the Exec. And I remember Mary Stacey saying to me 'Well, Mike Terry keeps on saying, "Who are these people [on the Black Solidarity Committee]", who would seem to be in his view the shit-stirrers. And she was like – 'Well, they have been standing out with us for years, just doing stuff on the boycott and selling T-shirts'. But clearly he thought there was something going on. And I think at

some point they realised there wasn't, and thought we'd better have them on the inside rather than on the outside. I joined the AAM Executive then and hadn't a clue about what was going on because those meetings were very formal and you needed to be on the inside and I was very conscious of not really fully understanding exactly what was going on. I was aware of all those subcommittees. I went to a couple of things that the London Committee organised and I remember Rachel Jewkes and others organised a few things for the Women's Committee. So I was aware of all those committees, all those structures, and how it was supposed to work and the central office. But I don't recall that there was political discussion on the Executive. And so it didn't give me any understanding, actually, of what was going on in Southern Africa or what the politics was here, in terms of what we were doing. And I very much got the impression that it was all sorted out somewhere else, and that this was something happening. And it was my first time of being involved in this way in an organisation. I wasn't sure there was much point, really, to be honest. But then again I somehow felt obliged to carry the torch for the Black Solidarity Committee, you know. If it was left to me I would have thought that of all the things I'm doing in the AAM, this is not the most useful. I was by this time co-Chair of Southwark Anti-Apartheid Group and that felt like a real thing.

CG: That's what we haven't talked about, what Southwark AA was doing.

LK: In the meantime Southwark AA was doing what Southwark AA did – which was taking on some of our black things that we wanted to campaign around, which was quite handy. It was nice to have a local group that was interested in report backs on Black Solidarity Committee happenings. We raised money, we applied for a grant from Southwark Council, which we got, which was a couple of thousand pounds, which was at that time a lot of money, to do things with. And so we were getting on with the Southwark stuff and we had a formal structure that reported back from the Black Solidarity Committee, reported back from the Women's Committee, and that was taking on the campaigns of the national organisation. So I remember there was a vote, there was a campaign about voting, just before the election. And we had ballot boxes in Southwark and so we've got pictures of Harriet Harman and Simon Hughes and all of those. And so we took on the campaigns and we made them local and so on. So that was all still going on – you know doing our Shell boycotts and our T-shirt selling outside Safeway on Saturdays. And we were still good friends, socialising and hanging out and arguing and so on. So that was all very jolly at the time. And I was joint secretary and so we carried on doing all of that.

CG: So that was up to 1994, the ballot boxes?

LK: So I was on the Executive right up to the end.

CG: Yes, I was on it too. We've got a photo with Cyril Ramaphosa – everyone else was falling away, so I started doing AA News again, because I thought now they haven't got all these people ...

LK: So I ended up with ACTSA [Action for Southern Africa]. A lot of people weren't interested because they thought it was over. It was almost a 'last person turn out the lights' kind of thing. I am one of those people who hold the fort ...

ⁱ The AAM Executive Committee appointed Alan Brooks as its representative on the Black Solidarity Committee.